



## Anchorage District Office RAC Report

November 2011

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### Anchorage Field Office News

#### AFO proposes termination of Chuitna River easements

AFO may terminate two public easements at the Chuitna River. The easements were reserved when the lands were interim conveyed to Tyonek Native Corporation under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. BLM later determined that the Chuitna River is non-navigable, nor is it a major waterway providing access to public land. The Chuitna is a popular fishery and easement users oppose the termination. BLM is currently working with the Regional Solicitor to finalize the easement decision.

#### BLM-Alaska lands vital to TERRA broadband projects

AFO is analyzing right-of-way applications for microwave repeater sites and a buried fiber optic cable on BLM-administered lands in Northwest Alaska. The TERRA Northwest project will connect with the TERRA Southwest route to extend broadband Internet service from Grayling to Nome. Next steps will include consultation with interested tribes and coordination with other agencies in the project area. AFO anticipates completing the environmental analysis and issuing a decision by the spring of 2012. If approved, construction would occur in 2012 and 2013. **(Right: repeater installation on BLM lands in the TERRA Southwest project area)**



#### Red Top Mine cleanup nearing completion

AFO contractors removed residual mercury-contaminated soil from the Red Top site in the summer of 2011. Lab results indicated the site now meets the State's most stringent cleanup criteria. AFO is awaiting the State's "Cleanup Complete" notice. BLM will then convey the site to Aleknagik Natives Limited (surface estate) and Bristol Bay Native Corporation (subsurface estate). The Red Top site is located on the Wood River two miles downstream of Aleknagik.

#### AFO lands featured in upcoming film

AFO issued a commercial film permit for scenes from the movie "The Frozen Ground" to be filmed at the BLM Campbell Tract Facility. Producers paid \$3,000 in rental and fees for a nighttime shoot on Nov. 12 with approximately 90 cast and crew members. BLM-Alaska has processed eight commercial filming applications since Jan. 1, 2011.



#### Campbell Airstrip management

AFO is developing an Integrated Plant Management Plan to control unwanted vegetation at Campbell Airstrip and prevent the spread of invasives to remote airstrips during field season. AFO will prepare an environmental analysis to consider both mechanical and herbicide treatments. The plan and supporting environmental analysis will be available in January 2012.

## Glennallen Field Office News

### Resolving protests on the Delta River Plan

The BLM received protest letters on the Delta River Plan from the State of Alaska, Department of Law, and the State of Alaska, Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas. The protests express concerns that issues and statements in the plan are inconsistent with the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and various federal regulations. The BLM Washington Office and BLM-Alaska are currently working to resolve both protests.

### Slana Homestead Area Appraisals

Under BLM's East Alaska Resource Management Plan guidance, the GFO has started to address failed homesteads in the Slana area by conducting a direct negotiation with failed claimants. Land can be purchased where a homestead was never patented or approved, but a home clearly exists. Some of the land for disposition was appraised this past fall.

### Tangle Lakes Campground Renovation And New Foot Trail

Completed in late fall, the campground renovation has improved road beds, designated 46 campsites, and has provided defined foot trails and a new day-use area within the campground. The campground will become a fee site for the first time this coming summer. GFO also partnered with a 10-person Student Conservation Association youth crew that volunteered 1,680 hours of labor to construct a new 1.5-mile hiking trail to Swede Mountain near Tangle Lakes. The trail offers fantastic views of the Tangle Lakes and the Alaska Range.



### Project Healing Waters Event in the Delta Wild and Scenic River Corridor

GFO partnered with Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment (WISE) and Project Healing Waters in August to host a fishing trip for wounded veterans and their families to the Delta Wild and Scenic River. Project Healing Waters is a national nonprofit organization that organizes fly fishing outings to help physically and emotionally rehabilitate wounded soldiers and veterans and their families.



### Youth Initiatives

GFO and WISE together provide over 25 outdoor youth events annually. This year more than 50 different youth, many from economically disadvantaged homes, participated ([www.wise-edu.org](http://www.wise-edu.org)). GFO also employs 15-20 seasonal youth employees, Student Conservation Association volunteers, and VISTA interns annually who are mentored in natural resource careers.

### GFO's partner receives national Public Lands Foundation Landscape Stewardship Award

The Copper River Watershed Project received this year's award recognizing the project's contributions to BLM's planning efforts; rerouting the Fish Creek trail by Paxson to reduce ATV stream crossings; construction of a salmon-viewing platform on the Gulkana River to reduce bank erosion; involvement of area youth and volunteers; and outstanding promotion of a landscape stewardship program.